

Lean Beef Sweepstakes Winner from Mass.



Funded by America's
beef producers

The Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative, funded by The Beef Checkoff Program, and the Pennsylvania Beef Council, are pleased to announce the winner of the "Get Lean with Protein" lean beef sweepstakes: Edwina Stefanowich of West Springfield, Mass. Stefanowich will receive a \$500 Gym Membership to a fitness center of her choice.

Edwina's online sweepstakes entry was one of more than 8,700 entries on LeanBeefSweepstakes.com. The promotion ran from Jan. 11 through Feb. 28 in more than 300 grocery stores throughout Pennsylvania and the I-95 corridor.

Edwina said she was enticed to enter the sweepstakes by the ad in the Geissler's Supermarket circular. Edwina and her husband are striving to eat healthy and they enjoy a good steak on the grill. Registering online, she was also able to learn about the 29 different cuts of beef that qualify as 'lean beef' according to USDA standards. Lean beef plays a key role in a healthy lifestyle and Edwina is excited to begin her fitness training at the gym. Edwina said this membership would have never been possible without the Lean Beef Sweepstakes.

"At Geissler's, we find that our customers are seeking healthier food options throughout the store and it is a priority to provide nutritional information to our customers whenever we

can," said Ryan Nilsson, Meat Department Supervisor at Geissler's Supermarkets. "In pursuit of this goal, we have recently added nutrition facts on our fresh meat labels — a customer service that few other supermarkets in the area provide. We find that our nutritional labeling, coupled with our helpful staff, enables our customers to make informed decisions about how beef and other protein options can fit into a healthy lifestyle."

"We are very pleased with the

success of the Lean Beef Sweepstakes," said Christie Molinaro, who manages the Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative for the check-off. "We hope to continue this momentum as we prepare to launch into the summer grilling season. A similar promotion will be offered with a grand prize of a \$500 shopping spree and a Weber Grill. Runner-Up Prizes will include professional grilling sets and copies of The Healthy Beef Cookbook."

Stufft Wins 2010 Pa. Beef Ambassador Contest

BEDFORD, Pa. — Kristen Stufft, a Penn State sophomore studying Animal Science, won the 2010 Beef Ambassador title at the annual competition held March 25 at Penn State University. Organized by the Pennsylvania Beef Council on behalf of cattle producers, the program is co-funded by the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association.

Kristen, and her family, own registered Hereford cattle on their farm in Mifflin County. Kristen serves as a board member, and acting secretary, of the Pennsylvania Junior Hereford Association. She's also a graduate of

the Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) program and was an extern with the Pennsylvania Beef Council during her spring break.

On campus, Kristen is active in the Penn State Block and Bridle & Poultry Science Clubs, and Collegiate Cattlewomen. She also plays the French Horn in the Penn State Marching Blue Band.

The Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador will represent the Pennsylvania Beef Council, Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association, and affiliate cattlemen's organizations at both agricultural and consumer events across the state as

Pennsylvania's beef industry youth spokesperson. At the end of her one-year reign, Kristen will receive a \$1,000 combination award and scholarship. She also will represent the Commonwealth at the National Beef Ambassador Competition in October. To schedule a visit by Kristen, contact the PA Beef Council office at 1-888-4BEEFPA(423-3372). To learn more about the beef ambassador program, visit www.nationalbeefambassador.org.

Pennsylvania BQA Award Winners Announced

BEDFORD, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Beef Council recognized an outstanding beef and dairy producer, who implement beef quality assurance (BQA) principles on their farm, with the first annual PA BQA Award Program. After a competitive selection process, the Beef Council is pleased to announce that Dennis Byrne, a beef producer, and John Ligo, a dairy producer, are the 2010 PA BQA Award recipients. Byrne and Ligo received their awards at the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association banquet on March 25.

Dennis Byrne is herd manager at Herr Angus, Nottingham, Pa. Dennis was an early believer in the BQA

program. He recognized the importance of what the program was trying to achieve—empowering producers to embrace BQA management techniques to make a daily commitment to beef quality and safety. Today, because of Byrne, Herr Angus is a model BQA farm. He has mentored many young farmers over the years and helped them start in the beef business. His convictions about the value of the BQA programs are at the heart of his efforts, ensuring a new generation of farmers will follow in his footsteps.

John Ligo and his wife Judy own and operate Le Terra Farm located in Mercer County. Business success

drives their operation, with decisions based first on the long-term business impact. They also place a high value on ethics, the image of agriculture, and simply doing the right thing. John's endorsement of BQA fits the strict criteria that he uses to evaluate any business or management decision. John has served the dairy and beef industries admirably in the past and will now make a great spokesperson for BQA this next year.

Both applications will be forwarded for national BQA award competition later this year. They also will serve as BQA spokespersons in Pennsylvania.



Training Your Family and Employees for Optimal Animal Care

Proper animal care on farms is critical because well cared for animals translates into a more successful operation and also an improved public image. Today, all farmers seem to be under a consumer magnifying glass; consequently, it's now more important than ever for all farmers and ranchers to continue focusing on improved animal husbandry practices.

Various organizations around the country provide their members with suggested written protocols for dairy and beef producers. The goal of both the Dairy Animal Care Quality Assurance (DACQA) and Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) programs is to provide protocols with best management practices for dairy and beef producers to better manage their herds and improve consumer confidence.

National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and Dairy Management Inc., are implementing their new Quality Assurance initiative known as the National Dairy F.A.R.M. Program: Farmers Assuring Responsible Management. The program was developed to demonstrate that U.S. milk producers are committed to providing the highest standards of animal care and quality assurance. "The F.A.R.M. Program states that a producer should hold and document trainings with employees on the dairy's practices," said Betsy Flores, NMPF director regulatory affairs. "The program recommends having emergency information and protocols available in the languages that the workers speak." According to Flores, their F.A.R.M. Program has an Animal Care Manual and Quick User Reference Guide on their Web site with information to help farm managers better train employees. "Our focus is only on dairy producers and dairy animal care," Flores pointed out. "Our outreach to producers, consumers and others in the dairy industry has been very positive. This national effort will help create a stronger platform for producers to continue to build consumer trust in the ways they care for their animals and in the products they produce. A national program will bring consistency and uniformity to on-farm animal care and production practices throughout the country."

It's that on-farm animal care and special attention to employees that has combined for a win-win situation at Rosendale Dairy in Pickett, Wis. Herd manager Clay Reese, a Pennsylvania native, knows first-hand that proper employee training is the key to a successful operation. "Farmers and ranchers care very much about the welfare of their livestock," Reese said. "However, we, as an industry, are too often constrained by time and resources to allocate the investment that training demands. Most farms would benefit from writing a training protocol. But any training is beneficial only if it helps an employee accomplish their job."

The Cornell animal science graduate believes that managers must first make time to train employees and overcome the challenges of limited time, resources and in some cases, language barriers. "Being understood is difficult regardless of language barriers," he said. "Following up the training with feedback, both positive and negative, must be a priority. Managers need to make time for 'sharpening the saw,' the day managers figure it all out, they should quit." Rosendale Dairy milks 6,250 cows. Reese manages herd health, maternity and parlor staff with all three areas employing 59 people — several from other countries that speak very little English.

Reese said that it makes a huge difference when managers make an effort to learn key phrases in different languages because it shows that managers care for their employees on a deeper level. He encourages employers to ask



Rebecca Long Chaney

about their employees' families. "Communicating is the best way to learn," he said. "Make certain that you understand what you're told, and that you're understood when you're talking. Genuine interest in what is important to another person is a necessary part of any relationship. And for most employees, their families are their first priority."

The dairy farm manager believes that employees with efficient training, and who are treated with more dignity and respect, will perform at higher levels. "Bonuses are an excellent incentive tool to reach short-term goals," Reese explained. "However, using bonuses as a compliance tool is problematic. Businesses need the best results delivered all the time. Performance deviations are often beyond workers' control. Morale falls at the worst time if bonuses are missed after a long period of time. Compensation packages of wages, health benefits, and 401K matching plans are better financial incentives to acquire and maintain good people."

A key to Rosendale Dairy's success is their team approach. Employees share common goals; they trust and respect each other to develop into an efficient team, capable of meeting the needs of high producing cows, according to Reese. "They also need to understand their individual contribution and role in improving animal care," he said.

Reese encourages more management training but said a good start is building relationships with employees that influence them to want to meet your expectations and develop and grow in the business. "We need hearts and minds, not feet and hands," he added. His personal on-farm experiences, coupled with his employee training program, help Reese meet the challenges of managing farm employees. "A structured orientation and training program is a great start to getting people to understand their job and work culture quicker," he said. "It is important that they understand how important their contribution is to the success of the business and what goals they need to meet in order to grow the business."

For Reese, improved employee training leads to optimal animal care that will yield increased profits and consumer confidence and a smoother running operation. "It's a win-win, of course, but we need to do a better job in getting the consumer to understand what high quality animal care is in modern agriculture and how it is the standard, not the exception," Reese concluded.

Rebecca Long Chaney is a full-time mom to four-year-old twin daughters. She is an author, award-winning freelance journalist and speaker. The Chaney's have been in Maryland for six years living on the old family farm that had been in the Long family more than 100 years. Rebecca and her husband manage the Randall Land and Cattle Company registered Hereford beef operation on the farm.